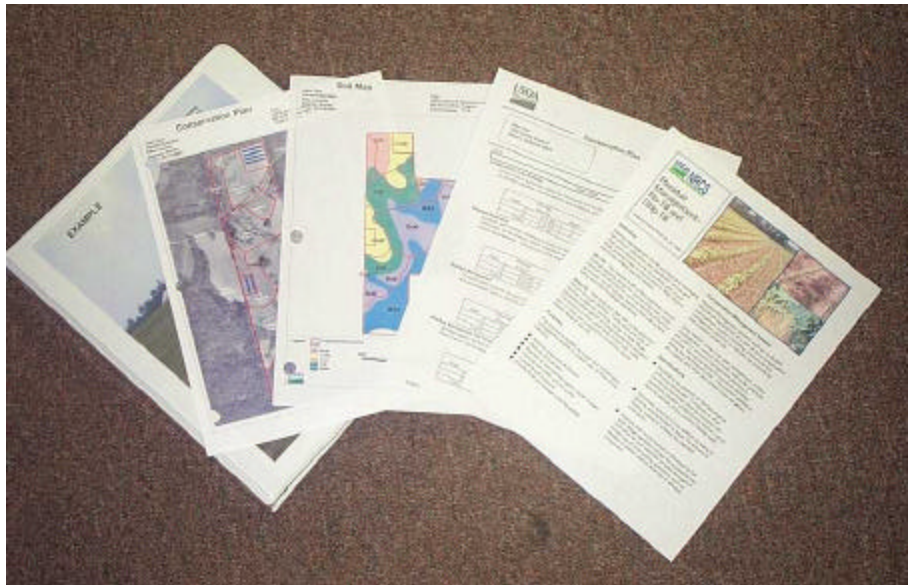




# Conservation Planning

*Alabama Guide Sheet No. AL 1*



## What is Conservation Planning?

Every landowner/user has different objectives and expectations from their natural resources. These objectives might include profitability, aesthetics, recreation, etc., but most landowner/users have one common objective and that is to protect their investment, improve their land, and pass the land on to the next generation. A conservation plan developed through your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) reflects the landowner/user's decisions on how land resources will be used now and in the future. It is a roadmap to will follow to develop and manage resources to attain future objectives.

## Benefits of a Conservation Plan

- Protects the owner's investment
- Maintains the productivity of the farm
- Helps meet the landowner's objectives
- Protects water quality and the environment for everyone
- Keeps farming operations in compliance with environmental laws
- Basis for receiving technical and cost-share assistance
- Reflects long-range decisions to next generation

## The Planning Process

The conservation planning process can be broken into three phases. During the first phase, you will

work closely with a conservation planner to identify your resource problems and opportunities for development, inventory your natural resources and determine your short- and long-term goals and objectives.

During the second phase, the conservation planner will outline and discuss the different ways that you can accomplish your goals while protecting and improving your natural resources. You make the decisions on how to treat each field and/or enterprise. This is done through the application of conservation practices and systems that solves the resource problems. The conservation planner can give many good alternatives and make some economic comparisons, but you must decide what you want to do, when, and how.

The third phase in the conservation planning process is putting the plan into operation. NRCS and your local SWCD can provide technical assistance in applying many of the practices. They can direct you to neighbors who have applied conservation practices similar to those you will be using. Your plan also becomes the basis to receive cost-share assistance from several conservation/environmental programs. During the installation period you and the conservation planner will evaluate the effectiveness of your plan and make changes as needed.

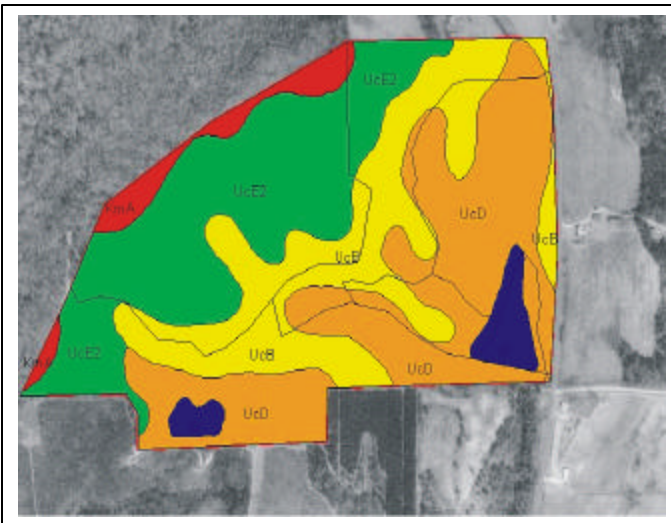
## Conservation Plan Map

The conservation plan map shows the ownership boundaries, individual fields, land uses, and acres in each field. It may show symbols depicting the location of conservation practices.



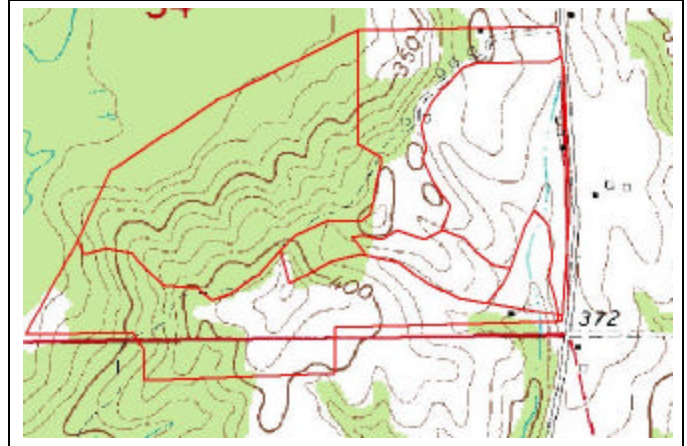
## Soils Map

The soils map reflects the soils within each field and the overall farm. The soil map unit symbols are described in the legend attached to the map. Soils are the basic building blocks for farm production and proper identification is essential for all planning, design, and installation of conservation practices.



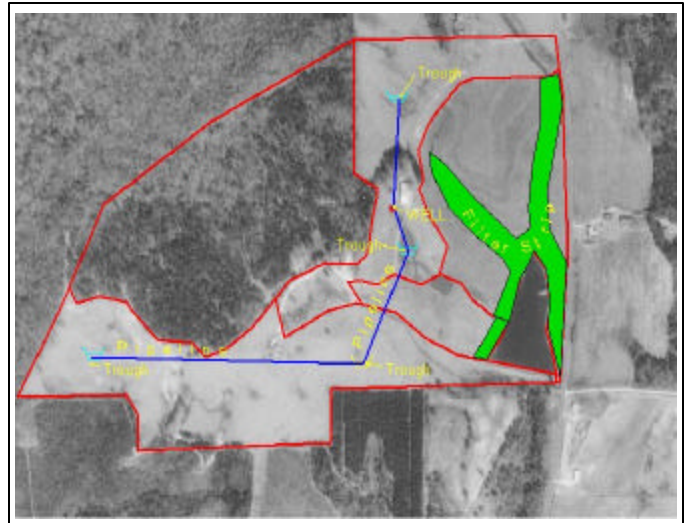
## Other Technical Maps

Topographic, hydrology, state and county roads, and other land related maps may also be used to help you and the conservation planner understand specific resource conditions and environmental effects.



## Conservation Practice Map

Other specific maps showing land management systems such as grazing plans, waste management plans, or other overlapping uses can be created to reflect your decisions on the landscape. These maps help you and others understand the plan practices and help in the implementation.





## Plan Schedule

The Conservation Plan of Operations displays the conservation practices you have decided to implement over the next several years. This schedule shows the practices, describes their installation and maintenance, number of units to be installed, and the dates of installation. This document is the basis for obtaining future cost-shares that might be available through USDA programs.

Total	Field	Planted Amount	Months	Year	Applied Amount	Cost
2125	2	8.5 ac.	9	2000		
2125	8	22.5 ac.	9	2000		
Total		31.0 ac.				

## Other Support Materials

Your conservation plan folder will also include other information and support materials to help you implement your plan. Some of these materials might be: conservation practice guide sheets,

drawings and design sheets, nutrient budgets, livestock feed balance, etc.

**Definition**  
Residue Management- No-till and Strip-till is managing the amount, orientation, and distribution of crop and other plant residue on the soil surface year round, while growing crops in narrow slots or tilled strips in previously untilled soil and residue.

**Conservation Management System**  
Residue Management Systems such as no-till and strip-till are established as a part of the a conservation management system consisting of structural and management practices to maintain the productivity and condition of the soil.

**No-Till:** The residue is left undisturbed from harvest through planting except for narrow strips that cause minimal soil disturbance, such as injecting anhydrous ammonia.

**Strip-Till:** Crop rotation, cover crop, post management, nutrient management, various structures, and buffer practices are used in resource management planning to protect the soil and water resources.

## What If I Am Not Ready To Plan All My Land?

You decide how much land to plan. You may have a specific problem such as a washout or an animal waste problem to solve. The conservation planner will work with you, following the conservation planning process, to help you solve your resource concerns.

## For More Information

Additional information may be obtained from your local Soil and Water Conservation District/NRCS office or view our web site at:  
<http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov/al/>.

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